

ROUTING AND RECORD SHEET

SUBJECT: (Optional)

Monthly Report -- Nicosia Bureau

FROM:

Chief, Operations Group

EXTENSION

2944

NO.

DATE

May 1987

TO: (Officer designation, room number, and building)

DATE

RECEIVED

FORWARDED

OFFICER'S INITIALS

COMMENTS (Number each comment to show from whom to whom. Draw a line across column after each comment.)

1.

Chief, WSS

RWL

2.

Chief, Comm Ctr

Hm

29/6

3.

SA/CD

2/29

6/29

4.

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Chief, MOD

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OPS-2
NC

MNC-7006
9 June 87

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director, Foreign Broadcast Information Service

THROUGH : Chief, Operations Group

SUBJECT : Monthly Report -- Nicosia Bureau -- May

I. GENERAL

A. Construction of the new bureau is nearly complete. Commercial electrical power was hooked up to the building via our substation on 1 June. The final check out of the air handling system, the generator and entrance gates will be carried out in the first half of June. We are now beginning to move equipment and furniture to the bureau, and cabling and wiring for the equipment is underway. At present, the contractor anticipates turning the building over to us by mid-June.

B. After a month long respite, the leader of the local communist party AKEL, Ezekias Papaioannou, reiterated on 14 May his party's charges that the Cyprus Government had violated the Constitution by granting the U.S. Government permission to erect a "spy station" on Cyprus. The allegations offered no new details. In a somewhat spirited defense, Cyprus President Spiros Kiprianou himself refuted the charges in a statement that noted that monitoring stations similar to our new building had been operating on the island since independence and before that under the British.

II. OPERATIONS

A. Monitorial/Editorial

1. With the reopening of Beirut International Airport on 10 May and the resumption of regular flights on 11 May, the bureau's regular newspaper vendor is again providing us with some Lebanese newspapers. Receipts remain irregular at month's end, however, averaging only two or three issues per week per paper. Consequently, we are still relying heavily on our arrangement with Embassy Beirut to forward papers via helicopter twice a week. Papers received in this fashion, however, are anywhere from 1 to 10 days old by the time we get them.

2. On 17 May, as requested in a telephone call from the Wire to the bureau chief, the bureau reopened at 2315 GMT to monitor Tehran Domestic Service in Persian for reportage on the attack in the Persian Gulf on the American frigate "USS Stark." On duty were one editor, one monitor, and one teletypist. The open watch was maintained until 0730 GMT when coverage responsibility was passed to London Bureau.

3. At the request of Jordan Bureau, who had advised of high interest on the part of an Amman Embassy consumer, the bureau on 27 May filed the text of a Beirut AL-SAFIR interview with Vladimir Godiyev, deputy chief of the Soviet Foreign Ministry's Middle East Countries Department. The interview had been published on 18 May.

4. In light of reports carried late on the evening of 21 May by two Beirut radio stations that Israeli aircraft were conducting late night flights over Palestinian camps in southern Lebanon, including allegations that they had bombarded the Palestinian positions, the bureau delayed regular closing for 1 and 1/2 hours. When subsequent reports indicated that the Israelis were conducting only "mock raids," and with Wire concurrence, the bureau closed.

5. On 22 May the bureau maintained an open speaker watch on Athens Domestic Service, which carried live coverage of a "no-confidence" debate in the Greek parliament. The text of Prime Minister Papandreu's speech to the parliament was filed at priority precedence, and after the results of the voting were announced (with the ruling PASOK party carrying the day) the bureau closed, 1 hour after regular COB.

6. On 28 May Tehran Domestic Service announced that special coverage of 'Id al-Fitr (end of Ramadan) ceremonies and prayer services was planned for the following morning. In response, one Persian monitor began an open speaker watch on Tehran Domestic at 0215 GMT on 29 May, 3 hours before regular OOB. Along with normal programming the station also carried a few minutes of live relays from the sites of the ceremonies. The bureau filed at immediate precedence a report on a sermon by President 'Ali Khamenei'i carried in the 0430 GMT newscast.

B. Lateral Services

1. On the evening of 14 May Paris AFP in English carried a report on the arrest in London of three suspects in a plot to extort \$15,000,000 from the Cypriot Government under the threat of releasing dioxin poison over the mountains southwest of Nicosia. The poison was to be carried over the city by the wind. The embassy regional security officer was apprised of the report and kept informed as subsequent reports on the threat were monitored over the next few days. The embassy expressed its appreciation for the bureau's efforts. The suspects were later identified as Cypriot nationals residing temporarily in the United Kingdom.

2. In keeping with a standing request from the DCM that he be notified of all developments involving the hostages in Beirut, the slot editor advised the embassy on 7 May of reports from Beirut Domestic Service that a body "believed to be that of a foreign hostage" had been discovered in northern Lebanon. Subsequent reports indicated that the body was that of a resident of Beirut and not a foreigner. Open watch on Beirut radios was maintained until the situation was resolved later the same day.

3. Following an AFP report that three American diplomats had been shot at while driving to work from a Cairo suburb on 26 May, Arabic monitors began watching Cairo Domestic Service, and the slot editor kept the DCM apprised of the situation as it developed. When Cairo media reported that two of the passengers had been slightly injured but had returned to work, citing a U.S. Embassy spokesman, the watch was discontinued. Voice of Lebanon reported later in the day that the Egyptian Revolution Group had claimed responsibility for the shooting.

4. In response to a request received in late April from

Analysis Group seeking information on the content of Cairo Voice of the Arabs "Voice of the Libyan People" program, the bureau conducted a detailed survey of the radio in search of "secret messages to opponents of the regime." We did not monitor any such messages, but in response to a subsequent message from Analysis Group noting "high" consumer interest in the "Voice of the Libyan People," we began regular coverage of one additional cast from the program.

5. At Headquarters' request we conducted a survey of the overnight file of Paris AFP in English from 23 to 25 May.

6. During the month Jordan and Nicosia Bureaus concluded surveys to determine which bureau should serve as backstop for Tel Aviv bureau coverage of West Bank Arabic newspapers. It was determined that Nicosia Bureau had a better track record in receiving these papers so we are now prepared to assume Tel Aviv's coverage when necessary.

C. Technical

Bureau technicians have installed antennas on the roof of the new bureau building. In addition, refurbished equipment racks have been installed in the tech shop, press room and teletype room of the new bureau.

III. ADMINISTRATION

A. Personnel

1. Senior Editor [] departed PCS for Washington on 11 May.

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2. Deputy Chief [] and family departed PCS for Washington on 28 May.

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[]
Bureau Chief
Nicosia Bureau

ATTACHMENT: Production Report